

Wrestling Forum

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OUR S E C O N D ANNIVERSARY ISSUE:

Welcome to year number three.....	2
Phantom of the Ring.....	3
AWA report.....	5
Wrestlers Are People Too.....	6
NWA report.....	7
Pencil Points.....	10
Memphis report.....	12
Speaking the Language.....	13
The Bottom Line.....	14
The Third Fall.....	16
Clagary Stampede.....	17
WWF report.....	18
Pulse on Portland.....	22
World Class report.....	23
Results from all over.....	24
Miscellaneous stuff.....	26

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And yes, we know "wrestling" is misspelled on the masthead.

RELAX...IT'S ONLY TEMPORARY

We thought you all might like to see what the very first Wrestling Forum masthead looked like (complete with wrestling misspelled.) Two years ago today, the very first copies of Wrestling Forum were on their way to seventeen subscribers (who we had pre sold subscriptions) and 100 wrestling fans whose names we'd gotten from a mailing list.

I went and dug out the old typewriter that I used for the first issue to do this page on , but after typing just one sentence on it, I decided you would just have to imagine how bad it was.

The first issue was put together by myself using correspondents in Chicago, New York, Atlanta and somewhere in Texas. They, along with our seventeen subscribers, are no longer involved.

When I put that first issue together, I thought I had an original idea.

I had never heard of Dave Meltzer or Bob Closson or Tom Burke. And since I thought I was one of the few "half-smart" fans in the country, the first issue more resembled PWI'S Names Makin! News than anything else. It's nice to look back and see how far we've come.

Luckily, Dave Meltzer's name and address was on that list of 100 names that we sent to. I can just see Dave sitting there, looking at that first issue with a smile, then shaking his head and addressing a copy of the Observer to me. Little did he know what kind of a monster he was creating when he dropped that copy of his newsletter in the mailbox.

Dave was the first in a long line of friends that I've made along the way. I can't begin to list each and every one of you, but these are friendships that will last a lifetime. I thank you all for your support.

Because of these friendships, Wrestling Forum is written in a very informal manner...almost as if I were talking with you on the phone. I've had no formal training in either writing or journalism, so I can use that as my excuse for occasional bad grammar and confusing ideas.

A lot has changed in two years, but two things remain the same: the price and the publishing dates (well sorta. We used to give a break in price if you subscribed for 3 months or more.) Wrestling Forum is \$1.25 per issue and you can subscribe in any amount up to six months worth. We still publish on the 15th and 30th of each month (the 29th this month) and mail the following day. This is the 49th issue and although deadlines are becoming harder and harder to make, we've only been late once, and that was just one day late.

Speaking of deadlines, the yearbook is being bound at this very moment. It will be mailed later on this week. There are still a few copies left and they go for \$10.00 each. If you want it mailed 1st class, add an extra \$1.00.

And for those of you who have written asking, yes, this IS the Knoxville where they found the mummy. If any of you still have newspapers from around Feb. 1st check to see if we made yours. And if we did, could you send me a photostat please? (For those of you who have no clue as to what I'm talking about, a family here kept the corpse of their father/husband in their home for 8 1/2 years because they thought religiously that he was still alive. They changed his clothes and bedding everyday.)

That's about it from here. For those of you who have been asking, yes, the Wrestling Forum third annual tournament will be beginning in a couple of months. We will also be featuring an old timers tournament this year so if there's anyone who you'd like to see in the old timers tournament, let us know. Sean Grande is in charge of this department.

And don't forget to cast your votes in the wrestling Barometer. This is our exclusive feature that comes out every other issue that tells us what smart fans think is going over and what isn't. Send your choices to Jeff Siegel at Box 5461, Evanston, IL 60204.

One more thing before getting to the news...all renewals, letters and other stuff should be sent here to the Knoxville address (box 65, Knoxville, IL 61448). Okay. Now let's look in on what's happening in the world of professional wrestling.....

THE PHANTOM IS BACK...

THE PHANTOM OF THE RING BY ED GAREA

(GLO)WWF-What price rating? The February Prime Time Spectacular on NBC is now, thankfully, history. The winner is NBC and Vince McMahon. The loser is professional wrestling; in fact, this may be a body blow from which wrestling may never recover. While I should know better than to be surprised at anything McMahon does, I was still embarrassed to be considered a wrestling fan. It seems that everytime I feel that McMahon has hit rock bottom in degrading what used to be a fine form of sports entertainment, he always manages to go one better; unfortunately, these may indeed be Pyrrhic victories en route to a march to the sea.

That morning I was to receive a small portion of what was to come: the New York Daily News ran an article in its television section about the prime time special that was to take place. During the course of this article, Dick Ebersol was attempting to wax philosophic on the nature of the game. He went on to totally distance it from what we usually know as professional wrestling and instead referred to this spectacle as pure entertainment. In other words, this no longer has any semblance to a sport, but rather has mutated into sheer spectacle. None of this can be taken seriously on any level. And there's the rub: How can a serious fan of wrestling accept this on any level? Answer: one cannot.

Imagine, if you will, the angles Vince used in the title change being used anywhere else, say, pro football. Could you see a Super Bowl title awarded on the basis of a look-a-like referee, and then handing the trophy over to another team? Could anyone conceive of Spinks' contract being purchased by Ray Leonard, and after Tyson was jobbed by a fake referee, the belt being handed to Leonard? (I use Ray Leonard as an example of how ridiculous boxing would look with the heavyweight title handed to a middleweight. The WWF looks just this bad today.)

Of course, defenders of the game will say that professional wrestling is totally unlike the other sports and must be judged on its own merits. What merits? Wrestling is at its best when imitating a sport, not parodying a sport. The Japanese seem to know this, although I detect cracks in that veneer as well. If wrestling is not to be judged as a sport, an athletic contest, what then is it to be judged as? Theater? If so, it is very low theater; in comparison, burlesque becomes like Shakespeare. Why, then, even call it "wrestling" if it is not to be judged as such? No, there must always be an absolute to which things are compared; in this case it is wrestling, both amateur and past professional (the tradition.) And in both cases, Vince's burlesque looks shabby.

Now I know full well that Vince could care less; the thing was probably a huge ratings success and paves the way for a successful Wrestlemania IV. And I believe that the "smart fans" (an oxymoron) will cease from their Dusty-bashing for a while to criticize this. Thereafter they will bill and coo about how much Vince is doing for the sport, and how popular and important he has made it, in between sending him plans, via letters in the Observer and Forum about how he could have some great angles. Not me, I'm afraid. I can see the handwriting on the wall. If this did indeed truly go over big, then there is no stopping Vince on his quest to destroy professional wrestling as we have come to know it and to replace it with a cross between Grand Guignol and David Letterman's "Stupid Pet Tricks." And after this, I don't ever want to see a letter looking down on GLOW. If you support what Vince is doing, you have no right to criticize the GLOW promotion. Vince is doing the exact same thing, only on a much larger scale.

CROCKETT AT THE CROSSROADS-So far, it's not been a good year for Jim Crockett, at least in terms of public perception. The Bunkhouse Stampede Finals were a disaster and a joke, as Dusty Rhodes once again proves himself the equal of the Original Shiek in putting himself over once again to

the absolute delight of no one. Ric Flair defended the Invisible Title against a person who couldn't be considered a challenger or a wrestler even in the widest sense of the term. All Road Warrior Hawk had going for him is size and illusory reputation. If that was not enough, Crockett also faces his stiffest competition from McMahon, who certainly dealt Crockett a goodly blow with his Royal Rumble on USA Network. What does the rest of this year hold?

Well, Crockett's problems all stem from one cause: Namely, that he is an old-time wrestling promoter who has not caught up with the times.

Old tried-and-true formulas will no longer work against a foe who refuses to play the same game. No longer is his territory protected; he must now learn to parry and thrust with the best of them. But two obstacles threaten to destroy this fight before it even gets a chance to get going:

(1) Booker Dusty Rhodes - Dusty is a quick fix, not a long-term solution.

If there are any doubters, I would advise them to look at the way Dusty booked Florida during the heyday of the Graham years. When he started, he made Florida the hottest territory in the nation. When he left, he deserted a dead territory; all his doing. What Dusty is doing now is stifling the promotion by wasting the most precious asset it has: Ric Flair. Dusty has yet to realize that the fans aren't flocking to see him vanquish the baddies anymore. Flair is the jewel of the promotion, the only wrestler at this point in time capable of challenging Hulk Hogan at the national level. But where do we find Flair? Seemingly trapped in an endless "buddy movie"; just one of the boys. This, too, shapes public perception. Hulk stands alone as champion; the title is of paramount importance. Whole empires could rise and fall by its capture. Flair's championship, on the other hand, seems to be an afterthought at best; something to put on the card to kill time before Dusty goes on. Dusty's booking style is also outdated. His concept of "families" that feud was once a good idea, but today it reeks of regional promotion and national promotion is the reality. Dusty is just too Southern for his own good. Flair must be put on the level of a Hogan (it may already be too late) and promoted in the same fashion if Crockett is to have any sort of chance at making a healthy run at Number one.

(2) Television-Crockett has got to understand the medium if he is to survive. His current understanding is dated, to say the least. He has to realize that these days are different. In the past, during the fifties, television bent towards the event it was covering. Crockett still reflects this thinking. These days, the event bends around television. It is now television which calls the shots; witness any NFL game: although there are supposed to be only three time-outs per team per half, we witness innumerable stoppages of play during the course of a game solely to squeeze in a commercial. McMahon halts matches in the middle during his "Saturday Night's Main Event" so that television may be satisfied. I'm not suggesting that Crockett imitate Vince completely in this respect, but that is the correct direction to take.

Will Crockett heed any of this? Of course not; he is too set in his ways and too mistrustful of both media and fans to bend. This is the thinking of the old-time promoter. It may be the undoing of all he has inherited. One doesn't have to be a McMahon clone; that would be too far in the other direction. But he does have to modify in certain respects if he is to stay alive, and he has just the quality product to base it on. If Crockett goes, wrestling is truly dead.

AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

Dumb booking moves here have completely surpassed just about anything that Dusty has managed to come up with in the past year. We are still trying to figure out the logic of one Verne Gagne but it seems that there just is none to figure out.

As you know, Tom Zenk is in and they are planning on pushing him to title shots with Hennig. On the Farewell to the Auditorium card on 2/4 where they brought in a bunch of old timers to work, they had Zenk up against the legendary Billy Robinson. Instead of letting Zenk get a clean pinfall or at least some sort of victory to boost his credibility, they let the youngster go to a twenty minute draw with Robinson. I don't know the whole story yet, and maybe i never will, but i'm told that Billy controlled almost the entire match. Billy has always had a big ego (not in the same way that Dusty does, but nonetheless, he certainly knows how good he once was and he likes to show off) and it could be that he was just teaching Zenk a bit of a lesson. So now instead of Zenk being able to claim that he holds a victory over Robinson all he can say is that he held him to a draw. Think about the consequences: If Zenk beats Hennig or even comes close, they've got a fifty year old retired wrestler who is just as good as their champion. That should look good in the eyes of the marks.

What does the number 93,000 have in common with both the AWA and the WWF? It's the number of fans who showed up at Wrestlemania III and the number of times they've held up the title following a Gagne-Hennig match. The latest one took place inside a cage and Gagne pinned Hennig after referee Leo Nominelli (a former football star) hit Hennig with a football tackle. Blackburn held up the title because of the seemingly partisan referee. Ho-hum.

About the only other news from here is that Adrian Adonis will have the chance to get even fatter as he takes some time off to recuperate from a broken ankle. While wrestling Ricky Rice (one of the Sharkey guys I worked with in Chicago) Adonis hit a soft spot in the ring and with all that weight, the ankle snapped. Soft spots or holes are created when the ring isn't put together correctly and it shifts during the match.

WRESTLERS ARE PEOPLE TOO

Once again we present a look at the out-of-the-ring personalities of some of today's stars. This particular column came in with the note prefacing the profiles:

"After the NWA Bunkhouse Stampede at the UIC Pavilion (in Chicago) i was fortunate enough to mingle around outside the locker rooms. Simply put, the nWA wrestlers were a class act. Most signed autographs and some even posed for pictures."

The reader has requested his name be withheld and we so honor his wishes as we look at NWA Wrestlers Are People too....

RIC FLAIR

For a man who is the number one heel, he sure is popular. Everyone back there wanted to talk to him or get his autograph. Dresses very well (he wore a full length mink) and took time for several pictures. This man is a class act all the way.

TULLY BLANCHARD

Rook time to sign an autograph and seemed to care that we (my friend and I) were big horsemen fans. He got a bit upset when we approached him again while he was talking to barry Windham. He kind of ignored us and walked away.

BARRY WINDHAM

Right up there with Flair in the nice guy category. Took time for pictures and autographs but really didn't want to talk wrestling or even talk at all for that matter. Polite nonetheless.

LARRY ZBYSZKO

Seemed to walk around with a chip on his shoulder. Didn't talk to anyone except Baby doll, waited for his ride, and left. Saying hello was a no-no as he seemed to get quite upset with the fans.

ROAD WARRIOR HAWK

The first time I met him, he was a jerk. Ironically he was with Rhodes that time. This time, he put down all three of his bags, signed autographs to each of us, and while he was writing, talked to us about the show, what we liked about it and so on. A nice guy.

ARN ANDERSON

I guess you could call him a total professional. he played his heel role all the way out the door. He never said a word to any fans and acted like they didn't exist.

JAMES J. DILLON

Ditto of Arn Anderson.
promoter GARY JUSTER

A bundle of nerves! I have never seen a guy so nervous in my life. He asked every fan how they got back here at least twice and seemed to be pushing the wrestlers to leave. He finally gave up and snuck out the back door.

STEVE WILLIAMS, STING, JIM GARVIN, RON SIMMONS

All four signed autographs and engaged in small talk before making their way out to the cars.

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

There is a BUNCH of stuff going on here and rumors of a major upheaval are running rampant. I haven't taken the time to sort through the fiction in search of the facts, so that story is just going to have to wait till later on here. What we'll go with is what's happening in the rings first and I'll try to have some information by the end of the report on the front office turmoil.

The best news for fans in the central Illinois area is that Crockett is coming to Peoria for a show on March 20. It's a Sunday show so there will be no problem in supplying a report personally for the March 30th issue of the Forum. They were here before in November of 1986 right after Starrcade and they had no local TV and still drew a respectable 2500-3000 fans just through the TBS broadcasts (and local newspaper ads which advertised a "still" cage match...yep. the cage never moved once). They now have a limited UHF station out of Bloomington (45 miles on the other side of Peoria) carrying their show so we should have a little better turn out this time. I sure hope they have Flair defending his title...in the past two years I have only seen Flair wrestle as a single ONCE live. That was in St. Louis. Last trip to Peoria he was in a tag match and at the Bash in Chicago he was scheduled to work against Animal, but they shot an angle to set up War Games III instead. Enough of that. I'll keep you posted.

Last issue we told you about a blackmail angle that would involve Dusty. Well, I almost had it right. Except that I figured it would be Jim Cornette doing the blackmail and it turns out to be Baby Doll. The angle was great (DID YOU HEAR THAT! JON LIKED IT!!!). Dusty was being interviewed and was spouting some gibberish about taking the title from Flair again (and you know what was going through my mind) when Baby Doll came out and gave some sort of speech about him NOT being the American Dream and how he was NOT above board. She then handed him an envelope that contained some pictures. He stepped back from Jim Ross and Bob Caudle and hung his head while he glanced through the package (from the look on his face you'd think that they were pictures of him and some farm animals or something). She then thanked him in advance for giving Larry Zbyszko some title shots and gave him a little kiss on the cheek before taking off. Dusty just kinda wandered off himself with Caudle calling after him.

The only thing I didn't like about the angle is that we're now going to have to sit through what appears to be a Dusty-Zbyszko feud. The end (probably culminating at a Bash show) will probably see Dusty gutting up his title against the negatives of whatever the pictures are. Rest assured, there is no way we're going to ever see what's on the inside of that envelope (even if it's pictures of Dusty and his family at Disneyland).

Another angle was set up with Misty Blue and Jim Cornette. Misty was praising Jim and the midnight Express for some of the moves they use and it ended up with her coming out while Jim was being interviewed to ask for some personal instruction. Jim took off his coat (he must be hanging around Dusty and copying his diet...he must have gained an extra 40 pounds or so cuz he don't look like a wimpy little manager anymore...he looks like an overweight one), and went to the ring to explain some sort of move. whilst in the middle of his explanation, Misty gave him a lame looking dropkick to the belly (no problem missing that the way it's grown) and Cornette selling the devil out of it. This all sets up an eight man tag where Jim, Murdoch, and the Express will go against Dusty, the Warriors and misty in Baltimore and probably around the horn a few more places as well.

And it yet another angle, the one we've been waiting for with baited breath, the Road Warriors were destroyed in the weight lifting competition

8

against the Barbarian and the Warlord. Now I've been assured that the weights they used were real, but I'm not sure I believe that. I wouldn't know, even if I personally tried to lift them, but since the competition didn't get very far anyway, it really doesn't matter.

What happened was this. Both teams had successfully lifted four hundred pounds. They were going to five hundred but Ellering and the Warriors wanted to go immediately to six hundred. Animal took his place on the bench (people who know about this kind of thing tell me that there's no way he could have gotten that much up if what happened next hadn't have happened), but just as the bar came up, Ivan hit Hawk (who was spotting the lift) in the face with a pan of chalk. The heels then destroyed Ellering and the Warriors, bashing Animal's head into the stationery weights. Animal bladed (very obviously if you were looking... you could even see him dispose of the blade under the ring), but it didn't draw much blood. He was taken out on a stretcher and they are now saying that he has had the bone around his eye crushed (boy! that hurt just typing it). This weekend on TBS, Hawk had a handicap match (and as they said, I'm not sure who the handicap was with) and then did a fantastic interview to follow it up with. Although predictable, the angle came off pretty good and it should draw some people to matches to see revenge. If Dusty is smart, he will let the Warriors completely destroy Warlord and Barbarian to restore some of the respect that the Warriors have lost in recent months.

This brings us to a point that I could probably do a few pages on so I'll try to keep my own comments short. Could someone tell me what the difference is in doing a job and doing a stretcher job? I mean, one you only have to lay down for three seconds. The other, you have to lay there on the stretcher and be carted out. I would think that would be more humiliating than just losing. If someone out there (especially from inside the biz) can answer that for me I'd sure appreciate it. There. That was short enough.

Another angle that I'm enjoying most of is the Varsity Club. Mike Rotundo took the TV title from Nikita in a match that saw the referee get distracted while Kevin Sullivan jumped in the ring and hit Nikita in the throat with a foreign object. Sullivan is pretty well abandoned the devil worshipping crap in favor of the roles of the "Gamesman" which is some sort of a take off on Dungeons and Dragons, I think. Anyway, since Mike now has the TV title and the Florida title, they did a little skit to handle that. During an interview Kevin referred to Mike as "his favorite" which upset Rick Steiner who like a little kid, wanted to know why Mike was his favorite. Kevin told him, "Because I said so. I won't give you everything you want, but I will give you everything you need." At that point, Kevin had Mike give Steiner the Florida belt, telling him "Don't lose it!" Steiner, who apparently has had either a recent lobotomy since his days in the UWF or a long conversation with Dusty, played the dumb jock role complete with the obligatory "Duhhh".

The part that I'm not enjoying about the angle is Kevin's interviews. The reason I'm not enjoying them is because they are inside comments that are ignoring some very sensitive feelings right now on the part of another wrestler. He sounds as though he's just rambling on, but talk about kisses being the ones that end it all and incurable diseases have a hidden message behind them. Just take my word on this one if you don't know what I'm talking about...Dusty had better put a stop to this before yet another wrestler decides to walk.

The status of Steve Williams is something that a lot of you have been wondering about. As of this writing, he is not working for Crockett, but the door right now is open for him to return. Steve wants to work Japan because of the big bucks he earns over there and Crockett doesn't want him to. Steve really doesn't want to play the heel role right

now, or at least the heel role they cornered him into. He also only wants to work part time, even when he is in the united States which is something that Dusty balked at. So as a result, Steve has decided not to return here and the big rumor is that World Class will welcome him with open arms.

Sting is in a position to get a push and start feuding with Ric Flair. It's interesting that so far, they haven't done a whole lot with him, and yet he seems to get some of the best babyface heat in the promotion. I'll bet that upsets Dusty after all the work he went to on Luger. The only problem at this point is that Sting can't remember his lines. He had a match in Raleigh recently that was your run of the mill squash. At the end though, JJ Dillon came to ringside at Sting's request. The night was Ric Flair night so JJ and the four Horsemen were celebrating big time. Sting was insulting JJ and he went to tell the girls that JJ was with something when his mind went blank. I mean, he didn't even ad lib well. Thankfully, JJ did and threw a glass of champagne in Sting's face. Sting attacked him and gave him a wicked looking flying tackle (which JJ oversold something disgraceful) and the horsemen made the save. Sting's only other problem (other than he has a bad memory) is that he still can't build a match without help. Everytime he gets some offense going, he has to stop and look to the crowd for approval. Four or five times of this a night gets old yesterday. He has turned into a pretty good worker however.

Perhaps they have learned their lesson. Crockett won't be attempting to break into the PPV market again for a while because McMahon pretty well has it sewed up. They will be countering though with some free prime time specials on WTBS (hey, didn't we read THAT IDEA somewhere? ...You're welcome Mr. Crockett).

The last PPV with the Stampede just didn't go over at all. I found out their logic behind some of the stuff they did, and despite the fact that it makes no sense at all, I'll relate it here. They didn't use any of their hot matchups (like Flair vs Luger) on the show) because they were "saving them in case they really needed them". I guess they figured they didn't need them right now, and now they won't have the chance to use them again to boost a PPV event. Folks, I spent the last five years of my life in sales. Part of that job entailed calling on businesses everyday. I never once passed up a business because I "might need that one some month when business was slow". My theory was that business was always slow and I could always need the money. They aren't running a newsletter or a magazine that can hold an article or a story for several months until they need it. When you use the phrase "Live and learn" when you're in business, another translation of that phrase might be "Going out of Business Sale".

They are going to try going into New York again on the 21st. The line up is interesting but whether it will draw in New York or not is something we'll just have to see. Scheduled is Ric/Tully vs Dusty/Lex, Warriors vs Barbarian/Karl Lord, Zysko vs Windham, Sting vs Rotundo, the Garvins vs Steiner/Sullivan, Simmons vs Stan Lane, Santana vs Eaton, and Misty Blue vs Linda Dallas.

One last thing...I wouldn't be surprised if the six man titles change hands tonight in Philadelphia (2/13) they was they've been pushing the match and the feud. I'll try to have an update in the miscellaneous stuff section.

One more last thing...the Lightning Express will resume the feud with the Shepherders that the Rock and Roll Express had started. Look for Tim Horner to lose his hair as the Sheeps have been doing run ins and attempting to do it already. Horner and Armstrong may finally get the respect they deserve.

10

P E N C I L P O I N T S

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE NEXT TIME

As for managing, here's a few hints: Puncher should connect. You'd be surprised how a punch can make contact and be light. Some old timers like Al & Don Greene, Bulldog Brower, Len Rossi, Dick the Bruiser, the Sheik, Wild Red Berry, buddy Rogers and Johnny Valentine throw punches you'd swear were deadly, but were light as a feather although they contacted and looked like shoots...If a punch misses, don't sell. If you think a punch didn't look good, just shake your head to register something, but do not oversell it....Never move or panic. If you move when someone is going to punch you, you throw his timing off and then you lose teeth. Note how, when punching, a guy will often hold his opponent's head with his free hand. This prevents moving and helps the puncher judge distance....Never show fear when being attacked by marks. It can cause them to attack like a pack of dogs. Unlike Sharkey, I would have fought back in that situation regardless of consequences - as you don't know who these idiots are attacking you. I've been suspended for real in a few places for slapping fans around and provoking riots, but I'd rather do that than take the chances of getting hurt by some geek....Know when heat is getting too high and bring it down (i. e. shut up, take a bump from the babyface, trip over your chair, whatever)so that the previous situation (being attacked by a fan) doesn't take place....Always keep a roving eye on the marks. It's not always the noisy one that is most dangerous....I'd have fired your ass for the rude wife joke. I'm from the old school of no cheap heat (i. e. racial slurs, sexual slurs, profanity and so on). Unfortunately, the business has changed.

-NAME WITHHELD-

-parts unknown-

EDITOR: THIS LETTER IS IN REFERENCE TO MY FIRST (AND POSSIBLY LAST) STINT AS A MANAGER AS DESCRIBED LAST ISSUE. FIRST, LET ME SAY THANKS TO THOSE WHO WROTE IN WITH NICE THINGS TO SAY ABOUT THE ARTICLE. AS FOR THIS LETTER, THANKS FOR THE ADVICE ALTHOUGH I'M NOT SURE I'LL EVER NEED IT AGAIN, BUT SOMEONE MIGHT (AND IT'S NICE TO KNOW ANYWAY). AS FOR MY MAKING THE WIFE JOKE, IT WAS CRUDE AND RUDE, BUT THIS GUY HAD BEEN INSULTING MY WIFE AND MY SEXUAL PREFERENCES (OR AT LEAST QUESTIONING THEM) WHICH PROMPTED MY PUTDOWN. I KNEW THAT I COULDN'T LET THE MARK GET THE LAST WORD IN OR EVEN GET THE BETTER OF ME WHICH IS WHAT PROMPTED THAT REMARK. I DON'T THINK THAT I WOULD LIKE TO PERFORM AS A MANAGER OR MUCH ELSE THAN A RING ANNOUNCER FOR A REAL WRESTLING GROUP. MAYBE A REFEREE. BETTER YET, A SPECTATOR WHO HAS NEW RESPECT FOR THE SPORT.

ON PRO WRESTLING THIS WEEK

I recently saw Paul Dangerously's "I Hate The AWA" Danger Zones. The guy is fantastic. He has taken this segment further than anyone could have imagined. These were his best since imitating Tommy Rich and pretending to be Wildfire as on the phone. My favorite is still Ted E. Bear (Reach out and touch someone)! Whose idea is it: Dangerously's or Pedicino's to only have guests half the time instead of all the time? This eliminates the "just another copy" stigma that has plagued every "heel interviewer" bit since Roddy Piper (e. g. Jake Roberts, Jesse Ventura, Buddy Roberts, Gary Hart, Larry Zbyszko, Don Muraco, etc). Is this done purposefully, or are they doing something smart without knowing it? Finally, when will Pro Wrestling This Week be back on in New York? Like a lot of die hard fans, I am forced to trade tapes for it. I'd like it back on here soon!

-CHRIS FRIEDMAN-

-Newark, NJ-

11

EDITOR: I DIDN'T GET TO SPEAK WITH JOE PEDICINO ON THIS PERSONALLY, BUT I DID TALK WITH THE OFFICES OF PWTW AND HERE IS THEIR RESPONSE: THE IDEA TO HAVE THE HEEL INTERVIEW SEGMENTS ONLY PERIODICALLY IS JOE'S IDEA TO HELP ENHANCE THE SHOW. I THINK IT IS A GOOD IDEA AND IT SEEMS TO BE WORKING. AS FOR GETTING BACK ON THE AIR IN NEW YORK, THEY ARE IN NEGOTIATIONS AT PRESENT WITH WWOR. THEY SAID THAT A LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN TO THAT STATION WOULD HELP A BUNCH AS IT WOULD GIVE THE STATION AN IDEA OF SOME OF THE SUPPORT. SO HERE'S YOU NEW YORK AREA SUBSCRIBERS YOUR CHANCE TO HELP. FLOOD WWOR WITH LETTERS REQUESTING THE SHOW AND IF THERE'S ENOUGH SUPPORT, YOU MAY WELL SEE PWTW ON THE AIR!

ON THE EYE

Wrestling Eye is the worst excuse for a wrestling magazine in history and I can't wait until it finally goes out of business. A magazine that lousy couldn't possibly last that much longer. Any rag that covers half smart independent marks who pretend to be in the business such as Jack Foley, Mark Curtis, and Wendell Weatherbee should be banned. It's a slap in the face to those of us who've paid our dues.

NAMEWITHHELD

-parts unknown-

BUNKHOUSE FINALS...MORE REACTION

I attended the finals at Nassau Coliseum with some friends but was disappointed with the show. Flair made Hawk look great, but looked weak himself. He bled so profusely that his hair was red in the front. It was nauseating. Somehow I do not think this makes the NWA look good on TV.

I would appreciate any information from your readers about wrestling cards in New Orleans from March 12-16.

-BETSEY ANDERSON-

25 Bigelow #3

Brighton, MA 02135

Another wrestling friend fan and I chipped in \$10 apiece to see the Bunkhouse Stampede. I was annoyed by the profanity I occasionally overheard (like Windham calling Baby Doll a [female dog]), but we certainly didn't hear the fans booing at the end. That was because we were booing Dusty ourselves. We spent twenty bucks of our precious hard earned money to watch the fat man put himself over again!?! Then we turned over to the USA Network and discovered there was still plenty of Vince's show left, and we were both struck by how much better produced, how much more up beat it was. If Jim Crockett wants to catch up with Titan... the Great White Whale has to go!

-DWIGHT DECKER-

-NORTHLAKE, IL-

MCMAHON IS THE CHAMPION

When you or I see Ted DiBiase with a championship belt around his waist, we see the greatest wrestler in the world. When Vince McMahon sees Ted with the belt, he sees himself with the belt. It shouldn't surprise anyone, because the Million Dollar Man routine is exactly how Vince sees himself in the promotinal side of wrestling. The crowning of DiBiase (and I expect him to win it at WMIV) is Vince's symbolic way of telling the other promotions that HE (Vince) is the world champion of promoters.

-ERIC HOYME-

-Indianapolis, IN-

MEMPHIS

This promotin seems to run hot and cold and right now it's running as cold as it's ever been. Departures are the name of the game here and they aren't a lot of talent incoming to off set the outgoing. What is coming is though should sell some tickets.

First off, let's take a look at recent departures. Terry Taylor's stay was uneventful and he's on his way to World Class. Teijo Khan is also gone and I've got no idea where he's headed as is the case with Scott Hall.

Newcomers include Brother Earnest Angel who is a parody of Jim Baaker TV evangelist extraordinaire. He came out the first week with a portable pulpit and started spouting some stuff about building a place called Wrestling Village USA, a rip off of Heritage Village USA and he started saving souls of wrestlers starting with Gary Young and Max Paine (who are now known as the choirboys). The gimmick went over like the proverbial lead balloon and resulted in a lot of viewers calling the station and the promotion. It was done in pretty bad taste. They managed to tone down the act for the next weeks' show with Lance prompting a good interview out of Earnest, which saw him admitting no ties to actual religion. It was still in bad taste and I doubt if they work it much longer. Titan almost tried something like this a couple of months back and it's a kind of thing that can ruin the career of who ever is playing the role.

Also returning is Tommy Rich on what may be a limited basis. He gave an interview that had him saying that he wanted the fans to cheer for him even though he was going against Lawler.

Tonight (2/15) in the Mid South Coliseum is going to see a classic match between the Rock and Roll Express (returning on a part time basis - they claim they are going to work for Titan this summer but in order to do that we're talking heavy duty steroids in the economy pack) going against the Midnight Rockers for the AWA tag team titles. This one should draw even though you'll be able to cut the arrogance with a foreign object.

Big news just in, the Financial News Network will be carrying the Memphis show starting I believe in April. Tentatively the show is set for Friday nights, but that could of course change before the premier show.

In other action, Bill Dundee has finally turned heel and he may be on his way out. It happened after a battle royal which ended up with him and Jeff Jarrett left in the ring. Bill threw Jeff out, but Jeff acught hold of the top rope while going over and when Dundee turned to strut, Jeff lifted himself back in and then drop kicked Dundee out of the ring. Later on on the card, Jeff was wrestling Jerry Lawler for the Mid South belt when the ref got bumped. Dundee came into the ring and hit Jeff with a chair then proceeded to destroy Lawler. Dundee is scheduled for another card, one by a rival promotion, in the next month, so his stay here may be severely curtailed.

Also gone from the promotion is Hecotr (who will also go to work for the other promotion, the RfMs/Doctors of Rock (ditto)). The Choir Boys won the vacated Mid South Tag Team belts when they were vacated by the Rockers because the Rockers hold the AWA belts. Also Pat Tanaka and Paul Diamond surprised a few people by showing up on the TV show, but they have just a very limited schedule as they look for other work.

Memphis wrestling was offered TV time in Peoria, but I understand they turned it down because of travel requirements. Just goes to show that all promotions don't have their brains being ruled by dollars.

SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE

Over the past few months, many readers, some new some old, have written in and asked what we mean by certain terms we use here in the Forum. There is a special language they use in wrestling that is meant for insider to use just like there is with any profession. Salesmen know what is meant by points of value and unit of conviction as well as closing. People like me who work in a hose factory know what is meant by Statistical Process Control, non mandrel built hose, and Just in Time Theory. Fans of wrestling have never had a list or a guide to go by because the business has been neglected. So let's take a look at some of the terms used in the business.

First off, let's look at the two basic components of the game. The Heel (the villain) and the babyface (the good guy). On TV they are often involved in squash matches (a preliminary match where they win with no problem) against a jobber (a wrestler who gets pinned all the time). He gets his name from doing jobs (being pinned). The reason for the squash match is to get the heel or the babyface over (accepted by the crowd and in turn, make people want to buy tickets to see him). There are even wrestlers who are neither babyface nor heels and they are called wither tweeners or rebels, but both are terms we don't hear used all that often.

Who decides who ultimately gets his hand raised at the end of the match is the booker (the guy who writes the basic script) and his job has nothing to do with booking the show into arenas. He's in charge of setting up angles (stories to explain why two wrestlers are feuding). The wrestlers themselves often call the actual match (make up the actual moves). Building the match (putting together a logical sequence of moves) is done between the two and communication is done by either quietly talking or a special language called Carnie (they talk real fast and run all their words together). The show is put on for the marks (the people who believe wrestling isn't fake) who are also called Kay Fabes, Kay Fabian, or some variation of that name. During the match you can see bumps (the wrestler takes a fall that looks like it hurt) to high spots (spectacular or sequential moves) to ref bumps (referee gets knocked out) to blind refs (the referee doesn't see what the heel is doing to the babyface, usually because he's being distracted) to the finish. Sometimes the finish is a screw job ending (the babyface loses on a technicality after thinking he had won) or even sometimes a false finish (where the ref might count three before realizing that the other guy's foot is on the ropes).

Wrestlers and managers hope to create heat (crowd noise, cheers or boos). Babyface heat is cheers and of course heel heat is boos and catcalls. Negative heat is a term that has popped up lately in newsletter and often it is thought to mean heel heat although a literal interpretation of that term should mean silence.

Very rarely will a match ever turn into a shoot (where the action is real). The matches are not called "fake" by wrestlers, rather they are called "worked". Workrate is how much a wrestler puts out while working.

Wrestlers often ask about the house. To them that means they want to know how many people are in the audience, usually

so they can figure the week's pay.

Reader of this and other bulletins are called smart fans. It has nothing to do with intelligence levels rather it refers to fans who are smart to the business, that is, know it's a work and know some of the inter workings of the sport.

There are other words and phrases as well. A word that I refuse to print here in the Forum that is a four letter vulgarity is used when calling the match and means the method in which the babyface is going to lose. A horrible match is called an "abortion".

Here is a list of other words and phrases that are connected with the business.

STICK - microphone

STIFF - someone who can't move very well or has a bad workrate.

IDAHO - another word for stiff

POTATOE - another word for stiff

LIGHT - a term used by a wrestler to say that a punch was pulled.

SHOWING LIGHT - the punch missed and it looked terrible to the audience.

TIGHT - a match where the punches and slaps are connecting with pretty good force...punches that look extremely real.

BROADWAY - a draw.

BLADE - to cut oneself with a small razor blade to make oneself bleed.

JWICE - blood.

KAY FABE SHEETS - newsletters

STRAP - championship belt

POP - Loud sudden heat

HOT TAG - the fresh partner of a tag team gets tagged in after a dramatic tag before which the other babyface had been having the snot beat out of him.

SHOOTER - a wrestler who will from time to time apply a little too much pressure on a hold just so it hurts a little to get a message across.

There may be other phrases and terms as well that we have overlooked. The ones we have listed however, should give newer fans an idea of what we talk about here in the forum. By all means, if there are some we have overlooked, send them along and we'll explain them in a future issue.

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THE BOTTOM LINE

by Ray Whebbe Jr.

DO FANS REALLY HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO LIE?

This whole thing about the obligation of a "smart" fan is starting to bother me. First, the word "smart" allows all others to be labeled as dumb. Secondly, why should fans care about wrestling image and secrets when the promoters themselves don't. Everytime flabby Dusty Rhodes puts himself over, every time Vince lets Wayne Ferris win, everytime we see a wrestler from "parts unknown" or everytime a Von Erich is called a world class athlete, nearly everyone watching the tube realizes that wrestling, at best, is a fantasy.

Although wrestling is an enormously popular TV sport, the majority of the public believes it to be fakey. Ask anyone in your office why they don't like wrestling and they'll probably say it's either too fakey

or too stupid. Putting two and two together, most Americans believe wrestling is a bit hokey. They may not know about booking procedures, the politics or blades, but they do have strong suspicions that something is up.

Therefore, to Kay-Fabe everything that resembles truth is silly. To lie about wrestlers credentials (especially those who claim to be ex football players) when anyone can check the records or even their real name is a bit silly. Nobody, I mean nobody, believes that the Ultimate Warriors' first name is ultimate.

If wrestling fans were told more truths, it could only help the sport. The success of Bill Apter styled magazines shows that wrestling fans want to know truths. It's a shame these magazines and cooperating promoters believe their audiences are fools that deserve to be lied to. Maybe it goes back to wrestling's good ol' boy regime, but it's time to wake up and smell the coffee. In no other business are its main customers fed total lies and propaganda. More truthful wrestling journalism is needed and in demand. If not, then why is the Observer internationally read?

Truthfulness would also be good for the business. If fans in Minneapolis knew Brady Boone was a home town boy, then they could root for him.

Realistic booking would help too. No man as talented as Jack Hart could lose every match. No man as fat as Virgil runnels could win every match.

When wrestling promotions tell out and out lies, they're telling their fans "you guys are so stupid, you'll buy anything."

Much to the promoters dismay, the fans are not buying all this bunk. The AWA drew less fans in Minneapolis-St. Paul in all of 1987 than they did in just three 1983 shows. Central States, World Class, Alabama and Crockett groups are also victims of telling their fans what they think of them.

As for who a 'smart' fan is, we all take this awfully seriously. Every fan wants to be smart and deep down, is. Most do not know how to get the Forum, Observer, or other Kay Fabe sheets. Granted one in the know shouldn't tell others the storyline, just like you shouldn't tell others the ending of a movie.

Many old timers believe smart fans and kay fabe sheets are hurting the business. Somehow i believe its many promoters' disrespect of their customers which hurts even more.

EDITOR'S NOTES:

As you can see from two different columns in this issue, I don't always have to agree with a writer to print their thoughts. Ray and I talked about this subject at length while we were in Chicago.

I do get a little hot when promoters claim that bulletins like ours is hurting their business. Get serious. We reach just over 200 people nationwide. Most of the people we reach attend wrestling cards because they realize that it's the paying customer that keeps wrestling alive.

What it is that is hurting the business is a serious combination of greed and egos. Promoters are too greedy to work together to fend off people like McMahon and when they do decide to get together, then egos get in the way because no one wants to do a job. bookers want to push themselves and those who kiss their hind foot. That offends more than a couple hundred people, believe me.

## THE THIRD FALL

Joey had almost given up on his wrestling career. He was going nowhere fast and not being well paid for it to boot. He was ready to head for home when he got his break. It wasn't much of one but it turns out to be the outcome of this third fall.

Joey had attended college in hopes of becoming a professional football player. He did well at college football but his playing just didn't attract many pro scouts. When it became obvious that he was not going to be drafted by the pros, someone suggested that he turn to wrestling. Reluctantly, he signed up for a wrestling school that had turned out some minor stars.

He came out of the school fairly stiff. Most men his size do. He got work for a small promotion that was planning expansion soon. With no gimmick, they put him in the role of a mid level heel with absolutely no push at all. Needless to say, he didn't go over and he wasn't working regularly. He was ready to give up for the first time.

Then came a call from another promoter looking for someone just like Joey. This was at the time that there was some cooperation between promotions so the offer was passed on to him. It entailed working regularly, (which meant steady pay) but it also involved spending the end of every match staring up at the lights as the babyface he was wrestling got a pinfall. They wanted him as a jobber so that some of the smaller guys could get over by pinning a much larger man.

He again reluctantly took the job. He knew that jobbers in this day and age remained jobbers for the rest of their lives. So after a short time he again became discouraged and was ready to head home to the cold of Minnesota. Then the first promoter called him back. He had an opening that might only be temporary, but at least he could win matches. The new gimmick sounded ridiculous; he had to play the role of a heel biker, sort of a modern day Hell's Angel.

When he arrived he found that he was going to be working in a tag team with another biker as well. A tag team on the circuit had gotten into some legal trouble so Joe Laurindas and Mike Hegstrand became a temporary tag team known as the Road Warriors, Animal and Hawk respectively.

And now you know the outcome of the Third Fall.



## CALGARY STAMPEDE

The bad news health wise is not limited to the WWF as tragedy has struck here was well. Garfield Portz, who wrestled in the WWF and Florida as Scott McGhee and is the son of British wrestler Geoff Portz, suffered a stroke and for a while was in critical condition. His condition has improved slightly although the reports I get are that he is still either paralyzed or partially paralyzed. He is able to speak, but the speech is presently severely impaired. Return to the ring is doubtful although stranger things have happened. Portz had been working here as a heel and he collapsed at a gas station.

We've been wondering how they will explain the departure of Bad News Allen when he left for the WWF. Apparently during a match with Jason, things got a little out of control and they ended up brawling in the audience. Canadian athletic officials take dim light of this and ended up fining both wrestlers for their actions. This was a legit fine. Jason paid his fine but Allen has not and as a result, cannot wrestle in Calgary until he does. In the meantime, he will split his time between the WWF and here and presently he is touring with Inoki's group in Italy.

Brick Bronsky suffered a legit ankle injury and is expected to be out of action until March 1.

Steve DiSalvo is headed to Japan to work for Baba for a couple of weeks. He is known for working a little too tight in some cases and Japan is not exactly the spot to do things like that. Lucky for him Akira Maeda works for the other Japanese promotion.

Pau and Rich Lauman have been subbing for Mr. Hito. They mainly have done jobs while here and their stay is something of a tryout for the promotion. They have worked the independent circuit around Alberta for some time.

Attendance continues to be good averaging around the 1200 mark. Titan was in and drew a sellout of 7000 in Calgary on the 19th of January.

I've heard that during the winter Olympics, they will not be running shows. No confirmation on that right now. Seems with the added tourists, that would be a good time to run shows though.

## WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

On February 5th past, half of the civilized world may have seen what I consider to be one of the top three angles (probably #1, but I want to give myself room in my mouth for both feet) in the last decade. Forget the fact that the match itself wasn't very good. Forget the fact that Knoxville's Mummy could have worked a better match than Andre. Forget seeing the screw job ending coming a mile away. The simple old "gotcha" surprise was a whopper and it came clear out of the blue.

Let me explain how I experienced February 5th, a day that will live in infamy (Sen Joseph A. Biden 1987.) I had to work so I took my Sony Watchman, a TV with a two inch screen with me. I normally take my half hour supper break from 8-8:30 but this night I scheduled it between 7:15-7:45 so I could catch the show live. I was taping it at home as well, but I knew there would be phone calls as soon as I got home, so I wanted to be prepared.

I misjudged the time a bit. The HTM-Savage had just ended and Randy was still parading around the ring by the time I tuned in. It's my understanding that someone who was involved in Hogan's match was late getting from the hotel to the Market Square Arena and that's why Savage took so long. It was pretty obvious that they were stalling for some reason.

Anyway, by the time the Hogan-Andre match was over, I was five minutes late getting back to work so I just shut off the TV. When I got home, sure enough, the phone was ringing with people wanting to know what I thought of the angle.

From what I had seen so far, I didn't think much of it. I gave the match a C, all for Hogan because Andre didn't do a thing except shake his head and fall down occasionally. Andre executed what had to be one of the worst suplexes of all times (Kelly has done better suplexes on me for cryin' out loud!) During the pin, Hogan practically turned over on his stomach just after the one count. From just that, I was not impressed.

None of the callers ruined my surprise. When I started watching the tape on a little bit bigger screen, I noticed that referee Dave Hebner looked like he had lost about 30 pounds. I thought nothing more about it. Then when I saw the real Dave Hebner in the ring arguing with the first one (brother Earl Hebner, former NWA referee) I fell out of my chair. I thought it was fantastic! Even Hogan afterwards crying, "How much for the plastic surgery?" will be an all time classic line. And there is no doubt that we saw the greatest referee bump in wrestling history (it's a long flyball to centerfield!..Look out! The centerfielder misjudged it! It's over his head!) It's my understanding that Vince made that bump worth Earls effort when payday rolled around.

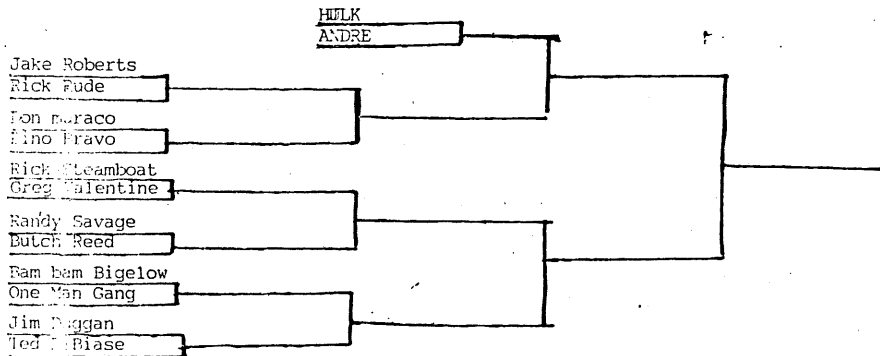
The show finished at what I would call a disappointing 31st place for the week with a 15.2 rating. I had predicted much higher. It did, however, win its time slot that night.

What I found most interesting about the show, though was an internal chess game played between Wayne Ferris and Vince McMahon Jr.

I had been told that Honky Tonk would be dropping the strap that night to Randy Savage. The source that it came from is one of these that doesn't get much higher than Vince himself. It was a "take it to the bank-bet the rent on it" sure thing, but as you know by now, HTM still has the intercontinental belt. The day of the show, Honky went to McMahon and told him that he refused to do the job on national TV. Imagine the guts he had to have to pull that kind of a power play! Now in the old days, McMahon's justice would have been quick and simple. Honky Tonk would have gotten the snot beat out of him in the ring. But HTM was smart enough to know that there couldn't be a shoot on live national TV. The risk he took was a calculated one and it paid off.

What he gets is another couple of months headlining against Savage instead of dropping out of sight and into preliminaries. Ferris basically is a no talent wrestler with a gimmick that is great. Trouble is, the gimmick has just about worn out its welcome and HTM knows that. The best guess we have right now is that he will infact drop the title to Savage in a match that puts the title on the line against a dream date type of thing with Elizabeth. Anyway, the reason the match on the 5th was so bad is because the entire script was changed at the last minute to accommodate the wishes of Honky. The thing is though, McMahon IS going to have to "punish" HTM somehow. If he doesn't then anyone and everyone in the promotion will think they can refuse to do a job when ever they feel like it. I look for one of two things to happen right after he drops the strap...either he's going to get hurt some night, or he's going to disappear from sight by his own choice. The next Saturday Night's Main Event (scheduled to be taped on March 13th from Hamilton, Ontario I believe for showing the following Saturday night) would be the perfect opportunity for this to happen.

This weekend on the syndicated show, they announced the status of the title. Jack tney said that they could not reverse a referee's decision by using video tape (there went the AWA's famous method of changing a title) therefore, Hogan was no longer the champion. However a title could be surrendered by the current champion, which is what Andre did (actually, Andre surrendered the TAG TEAM title, but we'll excuse him for that small faux pas) so he is not the champion. But then again, a championship must be won in the ring, so Ted is also not the champion. It was decided then to declare the title vacant (I got that part right last issue) and they have decided to make Wrestlemania a one night tournament to decide the champion. Hulk and Andre get a first round bye so here is the pairings for the tournament:



You'll note here that Honky Tonk Man is not among the participants. I am also told that the remainder of the WWF wrestlers will participate in some sort of a battle royal.

Since we're on the subject, let's look at Wrestlemania IV for a minute. It will originate from Trump Plaza in Atlantic City and not from the Superdome as we had originally thought. Don't even think about tickets. As I write this, I'm told they are sold out already. Time of the show will be 4 pm eastern. Donald Trump, the Billion Dollar Man, is giving Vince some ridiculous amount for him to hold the show here. Titan will make as much from the live gate (top ticket price is something like \$100) and from Trump's generosity as they did no the live gate at the Silverdome last year.

Quite a few of you have either written or called concerning the tag team match that was to have been show on the 2/5 card as well. As mentioned earlier, time got in the way and it wasn't one of those things like Crockett does (run out in the middle of the match)...like I said there was too much time wasted early on because of someone being late (I understand the weather was bad that night in Indianapolis). As far as I know, there was no turn done and that they are saving that angle until the next SNME if they go ahead with it at all. With the way Wrestlemania is shaping up, they aren't going to have to develop a whole lot of angles over the next few weeks like they normally would.

Readers and fans on the west coast weren't surprised at Hogan dropping the belt...the newspapers out there had the story a week ahead of time. Titan sent out publicity releases for WMIV listing Hogan as the challenger going in. Some people in the media thought this was a screw up on Titan's part, but I've got a feeling the release was well timed figuring that with the media's sure release, it might gain them a few hundred extra viewers. I also got some sort of something announcing the matches for WMIV, but it bears little or no resemblance to what is really taking place.

There's some bad news coming from Titanland as well. Billy Jack Haynes was fired/quilt due to health reasons. He has a heart condition and letting him wrestle was like approving his suicide. McMahon had basically pulled Billy out of all competition and Billy didn't like it. I've been told that he didn't want to take a back seat, so he's headed back to the Pacific Northwest to start his own promotion that will be in competition with Don Owens.

Also from the walking wounded department, Dynamite Kid reportedly collapsed several times during the past couple weeks including once in an airport. From what I understand of the situation, he has been taking a bunch of pain killers to deal with the pain in his back. You'll recall a year ago this time he was flat on his back wondering if he would ever walk again let alone wrestle. He made it back and his determination is such that he refuses to recognize pain or his current physical limitations. The pain killers that he's been on completely block the pain sensations and so he doesn't realize when he's too hurt to walk. His body instead of giving warning through the pain centers just falls down. You can bet that his role with Titan will be severely curtailed and I doubt if we ever see him full time again.

Continuing on the health scene, rumor has it that Gorilla Monsoon has suffered a heart attack. The rumor itself is completely unfounded and no one in Titan will make a comment either on or off the record on the subject. The only real indication we have that this might be true is that he has been missing from several telecasts as of late.

Speaking of the telecasts, the syndicated show from the weekend of 2/6 & 2/7 was interesting. The show had been taped ten days earlier in Hershey PA so they should have had no idea what was going to happen on the 5th's Main Event show. So, whenever Jesse wanted to talk about what happened (which was yet to happen) they censored his comments. In this area, we get the Superstars telecast at Midnight on Friday nights so I had the luxury of watching the syndicated show right after watching the tape of the NBC show. That was interesting. One particular instance that almost had me on the floor was Jesse getting beeped over and when he comes back he says, "Hey! What is this?" Immediately, Howard Finkle comes on with a voice over for a spot show in the Chicago land area saying, "It's the World Wrestling Federation in Hammond..." just like he was answering Jesse's question. I guess you had to be there.

The next week's syndication package though didn't waste anytime talking about what had happened. They led the show with the Hogan Andre match (and the more I see that alleged suplex the more I cringe. Not only has Kelly done better on me, I've taken better bumps than that

after stubbing my big toe in the dark!). Then Jack Tunney came on with the announcement. The commentary was all done outside the studio (as we reported it would be last time) and the funny thing is, you can tell they did the commentary in a studio instead of live. When they do it live, there seems to be more emotion in their voices as they try to get over the crowd noise. This time (listen for it this weekend), they all talk at the same voice level throughout. It about drove me nuts.

I got reports from the day after the NBC show that both Boston and Philadelphia sold out their afternoon and evening dates. Boston sold out to a tune of 16,100 fans and Philadelphia was similar the same night. Boston, in fact, turned away several hundred fans. The main even in the two cities that day? Hogan and Bigelow against Andre and DiBiase. They are running the match across the country and it's selling tickets like crazy. They will run the same show in Chicago tomorrow night (2/15) and I'm told that ticket sales for that show were running at a sellout pace.

From the reports I've gotten over the past week, DiBiase is wrestling even better than the Ted we saw in the old Mid South. Apparently he is taking his role as "world champion" quite seriously, and although for now he has the belt for only a week he's out to show how a world champion is supposed to wrestle. Isn't it amazing that for the week of 2/7, the WWF, the NWA, and the AWA all had champions that not only they could be proud of, but also, each organization had their best worker as champion (we still count Curt as champ...coz we all know what's going to happen there). Anyway, the tag match has Hogan against DiBiase most of the way with Andre spending an average of about 20 seconds total in the ring.

Now this is funny (ha-ha funny, not strange funny). The heel faction into the WWF, led by DiBiase, Andre and Jesse are claiming that it was HOGAN who paid a look a like Dave Hebner to come to the ring just to cause confusion. After having a week to think this whole thing out... I wonder how they were able to come up with something this brilliant. Hogan loses his title, but doesn't do a job doing it. He doesn't lose his heat. Andre wins the match and (I was going to say looks unbeatable or invincible but he hardly looked that) retains his heat in the process. DiBiase gets the belt handed to him and gets plenty of heat too. So in the eyes of the marks, Hogan didn't lose and the hate for the heels is at an all time high. Shoot, after the match Virgil actually smiled and I think his face cracked from it. He was back to scowling this weekend though.

Last issue I reported that Chris Love (remember the gay, flaming queen type manager of Tully Blanchard from the old Southwest promotion) had been given an audition by Titan. This week I got a call from my Titan source saying that that was news to him. He suggested that it might be someone with a case of wishful thinking. He also made some other suggestions that I don't dare print.

And finally, I think I've neglected to mention in past issues about the cards and letters campaign to wish Mathild get well wishes. I guess it was so memorable that it just slipped my mind. Anytime Titan has a write in campaign of any sort, it's just to get more names for its mailing list. This particular campaign is very special as they are going to be selling this list to other mail order firms. I understand that they are calling the list the "B. T Barnum Was Right; These Suckers Will Fall For Anything" list. Well if they aren't, they should.

PULSE ON PORTLAND  
BY Greg Anderson

The big news here concerns the Frank Bonnama Memorial card on 2/16 in Portland. Bonnama was the long time TV announce who died of cancer in 1982. Curt Hennig was booked to defend his AWA title against whoever held the Northwest title. Also on the card is a cage match between Rip Olive and Mike Miller, a battle royal to decide a new TV champion (more on that later), an Arabian strap match between Abuddah Dein and Brian Adams, and Coco Samoa meets a Destroyer (please tell me it's Dick Beyer) and a tag title defence by Scott Peterson and Steve Dahl.

On 1/30, it was announced that since Grappler held the singles belt he would definitely get the title shot at Hennig. Grappler said he would show what a great champion he is by defending his title against a "worth contender", and risk losing a world title shot. Grappler said he had picked his opponent earlier and when it was time for the match to start, rookie Art Barr came out. Grappler quickly disposed of Barr with a loaded kick to the midsection.

The next bout was a tag match pitting Grappler and Avalanche against Miller and Assassin. The bout was non stop action with no rest holds. With Miller and Grappler brawling outside the ring, ref Sandy Barr tried to restore order and Av loaded up his head gear and butted the Assassin in the chest. Grappler reentered and held Assassin down as Av prepared to come off the top Turnbuckle with a splash. Brian Adams ran out with his kendo stick and whacked Av with it several times and then also cracked Grappler with it twice before the heels fled.

Then Abbuda Dein defended his TV title against Coco Samoa. Coco delivered a splash on Dein when the Grappler stormed in. Samoa turned around and worked Grappler over a bit. Samoa went back to Dein and Grappler managed to shove ref Barr down then tap his boot on the mat. Suddenly, Billy Two Eagles showed up (we had no idea he was around) and worked on the masked man. Joey Jackson stormed in and worked the indian over. Assassin evened up the sides and a brawl was on until the heels left. Promoter Barry Owen came down and ordered the TV trophy held up.

Also it was revealed that a six man penalty box tag match would be held involving the six men on 2/6.

In other action on the 6th, Mike Miller pinned C. W. Bergstrom to take the first fall and during the second Rip Oliver came in with a chair and smacked miller twice on the back. Oliver then came off the top rope to jam the edge of the chair into Mike but Miller rolled away. Oliver fled from the ring as Miller vowed revenge over the house microphone...Avalanche and Brian Adams faced off in the next match. Adams went up for a body slam near the ropes and Dein hopped to the ring apron near the ropes and grabbed Adams to keep him from going up (Avalanche has yet to be body slammed and has a \$500 body slam challenge from when he was ababyface). The manager then held Brian on the ropes while Av adjusted his head gear and then headbutted him in the chest. Dein then used the belt to whip Brian repeatedly until Assassin showed up for the save. This of course, heated up the 2/16 strap match between Dein and Adams...In a non title tag match, Peterson and Dahl took the 1st fall over Av and Dein. After all four brawled in the ring, Dahl had Abbuda pinned as Av was covering Peterson. The ref counted the legal fall over the Arab giving the faces a victory. The time limit bell rang during the second fall so Peterson and Dahl were awarded the match victory. On 2/13 the tag champs defend against Av and Dein and Grappler meets Adams in a kendo stick match.

A couple of insider tidbits were mentioned recently on the Portland TV show as Mike miller was doing color commentary he said, "There's Steve Dahl with a hot tag!" Also on a 2/6 TV interview Samoa revealed that he was Jimmy Snuka's brother.

## WORLD CLASS

If it weren't for the lousy announcers, I'd swear I was watching the old UWF promotion. Without question, World Class is a ton better than it has been in the past few years, and except for hot angle with Hogan losing the belt, they have the hottest things going right now among any American group.

First of all, Michael Hayes should be returning by the time you read this. When I first heard that he had been fired from Crockett, I assumed that he would be coming back to re-unite the Freebirds. However, he has sent a tape to the promotion to use to hype his return and I'm told it's a babyface interview spot. He apparently thinks that the whole Freebird-Von Erich feud should be forgotten and put behind them. This has to be the beginning of a Hayes-Freebird feud with Hayes teaming with the unlikely Von Erich clan. I am told that Michael Hayes will be holding a concert in conjunction with a show at the Reunion Arena next month and so far, everyone and their brother that I've talked to expect Terry Gordy to do something to mess up the concert and officially start the feud. Now a Gordy Hayes feud could draw well in just about any promotion, but especially here in Texas where the Freebirds are so over already. We just might be looking at the feud of the year 1988.

Aside from that, there are more new faces coming in. Last issue we reported on the arrival of Pat Tanaka. Well, he's not in full time rather he's working for the World Organization Wrestling out of Florida. But NOW is going to be working with World Class. I also understand that several other groups are going to be working with World Class as well, so this gives them something that no other promotion has: cooperation that works. In fact, the talent pool available to World Class at this point puts them in a position where they could actually put on a better Crockett Cup than Crockett could. If someone would have told me that three months ago, I would have laughed so hard the bulletin would have been three weeks late. One of these days I'll be at the point where absolutely nothing will surprise me anymore.

Another new arrival is Terry Taylor. He's in currently as neither a babyface nor a heel. His interview are being played right down the middle and he's being matched up against Al Perez here at first (okay, so a new comer getting title shots right off the bat IS a little dumb), who is also in the same position. Terry, while working for Crockett had been constantly told by a certain whale (no names but his initials are Dusty Rhodes) that he just wasn't getting over as a heel. I guess that shows how much smart fans know as Taylor was voted Best Heel of the Year by our readership. Anyway, with the constant mind games that Dusty put him through, he lost some faith in himself and had convinced himself that turning heel was the worst career move he ever made. I hope that he gets his head on straight while down here and goes ahead and plays the heel role to the hilt after a few weeks and resumes the feud with Chris Adams.

Speaking of Adams, he was part of what has to be the dumbest comment ever made by a wrestling announcer (and folks, THAT covers a lot of territory). Chris was in the ring and made a challenge to Terry Gordy who was outside the ring. Chris told him that he made him "want to puke!" After seeing how well the word puke went over with the crowd, he repeated it before Gordy hit the ring and a brawl ensued. Mark Lowrance in his classic style commented, "Well, so much for the regurgitation!" Mark...why don't you just go sell a car or something, huh?

And finally, Steve Williams may be coming here. The story of his "departure" or alleged departure from Crockett land is chronicled in the NWA report, but word has it he wants to come here. Isn't it ironic that they tried to tour the US when they had a cast of no bodies. Now that all the talent has come in, they're content to stay in Dallas.

## RESULTS FROM ALL OVER

1-30 BALTIMORE (WWF) - courtesy of Fred Naarisma...  
 Sika pinned Poffo...Bolsheviks beat the Young Stallions....  
 Danny davis over George Skaaland...Koko over Dino bravo  
 via DQ...Honky Tonk & valentine pinned Beefcake and  
 Savage...Sherri Martel beat Velvet McIntyre...Rude and  
 Steamboat went to a double count out...Strike Force  
 downed Hart Foundation...NOTES: Attendance 7000...  
 Several no shows including George Steele and Sam Houston  
 (it was announced there had been a death in his family)...  
 Koko went for top rope drop kick by Dino moved and Koko  
 nailed the ref...ref DQ'd Dino, we guess for pulling  
 him into the way...good heat for HTM/valentine vs Beefy/  
 Savage...Beefy had sleeper on HTM when Greg came off  
 the ropes with the megaphone (blind ref)...Martel (Rick  
 variety) pinned Neidhart with his swan dive.

2-4 KANSAS CITY (WWA) - courtesy of Bruce Grummert...  
 Dave peterson defeated Kareem Mohammed...Cuban Assassin  
 vs Steve Ray in a boxing match ruled a no contest...  
 Masa Chono beat Vinnie Valentino...Ric Paterson won  
 an 8 man elimination tag match...Bob Brown drew Paterson  
 ...Mike George beat Larry power...David Power over Curtis  
 Hughs...Ken Timbs pinned Prince Tapu...NOTES: Attendance:  
 poor...Power Twins look to be next tag champs...

2-6 BROOKLYN (IWA) - courtesy of Steve meyersen & mike  
 Rand...Mike Sundance over Mr. Ax by count out (C-)...  
 Power Twins (John & Tony Storz) co won 10 man battle  
 royal (C)...Cheetah Kid over Tom Martin (C)...Bialo  
 the Giant beat Mad Russian #2 (D+)...Mongol drew Krush  
 (D)...Misty Blue DDQ vs Comrade Orga (D)...Ted Arcidi  
 DCOR vs Cousin Luke (D-)...Power Twins and Johnny Rodz  
 over Abby the butcher, Luke graham and mad Russian #1  
 (B)...NOTES: Attendance 1000...show started ½ hour late...Gary  
 Cappetta was ring announcer...Power Twins working are  
 the same as in WWA...Iron Sheik no showed...Misty was  
 introed as the IWA-NWA champ...wonder what Dusty would  
 think of that order...Cheetah Kid did a Tiger Mask leap  
 over ropes into Martin's chest while Martin was outside  
 the ring...lots of juice in last match with lots of  
 foreign objects...belts, chairs, pencils...



2-6 BOSTON (WWF) - courtesy of John McAdam...Poffo pinned Gibbs (D+)...Rougeaus beat Horowitz/Lombardi (C+)...Davis over Boone (B-)...Houston downed Sharpe (B+)...Hogan/Bigelow over DiBiase/Andre (B+)...Steamboat DCOR with Bravo (C-)...Sherri pinned robin (C)...OMG pinned George Steele (D+)...Islanders over Bulldogs by DQ (A-)...NOTES: Attendance 16,100 with a complete sellout and several hundred turned away...Rougeau's match was slow but good in spots...Danny davis has improved...Houston was good, Sharpe was the pits.... Davis did a run in at the end...crowd was completely out of control for Hogan match...Bigelow and Ted worked the most and Hogan worked hard...Dragon's match had a lot of light showing and looked bad...crowd slept during ladies match...Slick saved OMG-Steele match and kept it from getting the dreaded Z rating...Bulldogs whipped Islanders with their invisible dog leashes to get DQ'd.

2-8 LOS ANGELES (WWF) - courtesy of Andy dragos... Scott Casey over Gibbs (C-)...Houston pinned Davis (B+)...OMG COR Jake (B-)...JB Angels beat Glamour Girls (B+)...DiBiase pinned Bigelow (A)...Spivey over Poffo (D+)...Beefcake pinned Valentine (C)...Islanders by DQ over Bulldogs (B-)...NOTES: Attendance: 3000... Sam Houston over in LA...crowd was constantly calling for the DDT...Heat in DiBiase-Bigelow match was Hogan-esque...Bam bam did a clean job in the middle (well, after Virgil creamed him with the championship belt)... Spivey and Poffo wrestled but they really took the night off...Beefy-Valentine had a double pin with Beefy getting should er up in time.

2-9 NEW HAVEN (WWF) courtesy of Ron Lemeiux...Roma pinned Lombardi...Sherri over Robin...SD Jones beat Sika...Boone over Johnn V...Rude over Koko...Rougeaus beat ConQuistador/Mancini...Bravo pinned Hillbilly... Savage/Strike Force beat Harts/HTM in cage match... NOTES: Attendance 2000...Ron should get a special award for attending such a lousy card...cage match had only one bump and that was HTM crotching himself as he tried to get out of cage...rules were that first entire team out won....that doesn't make sense.

## MISCELLANEOUS STUFF

First let's take care of the trivia question found in the last issue...I asked what other major singles title Larry Zbyszko had held prior to winning the golf title in the NWA. Actually I said, "Held". I also said there was only one that I knew of. Well, there were two. The one that I was thinking of was the Americas title in the AWA that had a whole two champions before they conveniently forgot about it. The other was a title that he never actually won, but rather bought. He bought the old National Heavyweight championship in the old Georgia promotion back in 1983 or so. He bought the title from Killer Tim Brooks who had won it from Paul Orndorff. This time our trivia question comes from the Third Fall feature in this issue. Who was the tag team that the Road Warriors replaced in the old Georgia promotion. Answer next time and remember...there is no prize or anything for a correct answer... this is just for fun.

I didn't get a chance to cover the reasons behind the NWA getting a live shot in Peoria and it deserves mentioning. On the heels of the hottest angle in TV history, WHOI-TV channel 19 out of Peoria has pulled all WWF programming off the station. It is not currently going to replace the show with anything. There are two sides to the story of course...The TV station says it was upset that Titan would only come to town once every five or six months or so and they wanted live wrestling more often. The local advance man was out of Chicago and wasn't dealing with the local people like they wanted. One person at the station told me that the fact that Titan hyped the NBC card so heavily on local broadcasts (WHOI is an ABC affiliate) that station management was upset about that. Now Titan's side is quite different. They claim they pulled the plug because WHOI kept switching the time of the show and that resulted in lousy attendance (give me a break! Twenty-three second main events is what keeps people home!). They claim they were willing to come to town once every other month but due to the scheduling of the show it was costing them money. You decide who to believe. Personally, I'd be willing to bet it's a combination of both stories.

Got a quick reader request and one that hopefully will draw a large response...Kurt Gebbs, Remigihofstrasse 37, 8730 Uznach, Switzerland is looking for someone to supply him with WWF tapes. He is interested only in the very best matches (let's not tell him it would take a long time to fill a tape, okay?) and only in the WWF as that's the only wrestling federation available in Europe. His English is very good and he promises to respond to anyone who writes with information.

And for any of you looking for a job, Titan is running ads again in Broadcasting magazines looking for an experienced play by play announcer and an announcer to conduct interviews.

CONGRATULATIONS GO OUT to our Memphis correspondent Jeff Archey and his brand new FIANCE Rinita! They made the announcement official as of Valentine's Day and an April wedding is planned.

While we're off the subject of wrestling for a second, know what happens to an undefeated high school basketball team when they get mentioned on Paul Harvey News, USA Today, and other national forms of national media? They get big headed and lose two games. Record is now 19-2.

Jeff Archey also reports in on the USA Wrestling promotion based out of the other Knoxville (TN) which is part of the continental group that broke off from the Birmingham based promotion. They have a big card coming up in Chattanooga which is bringing in talent from quite a few places. Terry Gordy is slated to appear (this is his home town and his is very over as a babyface) as well as Bill Dundee, the Bullet, the Mongolian Stomper, and buddy Landel. This is becoming a hot area as Jeff reports that while attending matches in Knoxville, it was the

first time he'd ever had to stand in line for over thirty minutes just to get a ticket.

In the old Continental promotion, randy Culley is in and they have a little inside joke going. He is being called "Detroit Demolition". If you'll remember, he was one of the original members of Demolition and was replaced by Barry Darsow. Downtown Bruno is handling the managerial duties here.

Let me take care of a couple of more reader requests: Greg Anderson (who does our Pacific northwest report) has some old wrestling magazines for sale. They are from the early to mid seventies and you can contact him at 73 B Veys Drive, Kelso, WA 98626.

Also, Bob Saydlowski Jr of 246 Pomeroy Ave, Pittsfield MA, 01201 has over 400 hours of wrestling on tape. To get a copy of his tape list, send \$2.00 (which is refundable with your first order).

For those of you who have joined the UAWF in the past month and haven't received your membership materials yet, relax...it will be on its way soon. I had decided to get computerized (gasp!) and I went to see about the computer this past weekend. Never mind. I'm going back to doing it by hand. I'll be processing those memberships this next week. For those of you interested in joining, send \$15.00 for a single membership and \$2.00 for each additional member of your family to UAWF - Box 215 - Galesburg, IL 61402. Details on the convention should be released next issue and to go, you must become a member by May 30, 1988.

Crockett has made another advance in this area. He has picked up the local NBC affiliate out of the Quad Cities for his world wide show. That's the good news. The bad news is it's on at 1:10 AM on Monday mornings. Oh well, I guess that's why they invented video recorders.

Also on the positive side there, Ted Turner has come to Crockett's aid in the PPV war. He will help cack the NWA thru Turner Home Entertainment. They are promising two events (one in July and the other in either December or January) with at least 10 bouts and two and a half hours of programing. Cable TV companies will split the proceeds 50-50 with THE and Turner and Crockett have not disclosed the percentage split between them.

That's it for another issue. Short month this time. See ya soon!

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